

Message Text

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E.O. 11652 : NA

TAGS : PINS, PFOR, NI, UK

SUBJ : STATEMENT BY FMG IMPLICATING GOWON IN COUP PLOT

REF : LAGOS 2020

THERE FOLLOWS FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT ISSUED YESTERDAY BY FMG (REFTEL) ALLEGING EX-HEAD OF STATE GOWON INVOLVED IN DIMKA COUP PLOT, LISTING ALLEGED MOTIVES OF PLOTTERS AND FMG LEADERS ALLEGEDLY TARGETED BY PLOTTERS FOR ASSASSINATION. QTE:

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS NOT MISLED BY SPECULATIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS, THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT WISHES TO EXPLAIN THE MOTIVE AND THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS OF THE ATTEMPTED COUP WHICH COMMENCED AT 8:30 A.M. AND COLLAPSED AT 1 P.M. LAST FRIDAY.

INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED OUT THUS FAR HAVE REVEALED THAT ON FRIDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY, 1976 AT ABOUT 9:15 A.M. LT.COL. B.S. DIMKA ACCOMPANIED BY TWO ARMED ESCORTS CALLED AT THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION.

HE REQUESTED THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO REPORT TO THE BRITISH
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GOVERNMENT THAT HE, DIMKA, AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAD TOPPLED AND TAKEN

OVER THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA.
HE FURTHER REQUESTED THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO ARRANGE FOR GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON TO RETURN IMMEDIATELY AND ASSUME THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS COUNTRY.

LT.-COL. DIMKA INFORMED THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER THAT HE AND OTHER COUP LEADERS HAD ASSASSINATED THE HEAD OF STATE, GENERAL MURTALA RAMAT MUHAMMED; THE CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, LT.-GENERAL OLUSEGUN OBASANJO. HE INDICATED THAT LT.-GENERAL THEOPHILUS Y. DANJUMA HAD ESCAPED ASSASSINATION BUT THAT HE WAS BEING TRACKED DOWN TO BE KILLED.

AFTER 35 MINUTES WITH THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, LT.-COL. DIMKA LEFT. SOME THREE HOURS LATER, AT ABOUT 1 P.M. THE FIRST OFFICIAL REPORT OF LT.-COL. DIMKA'S VISIT WAS MADE BY THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION TO A FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY.

FROM DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION GATHERED SINCE THE ABOORTIVE COUP ATTEMPT, IT HAS BEEN ASCERTAINED THAT THE LONG LIST OF THOSE TO BE ASSASSINATED INCLUDED NOT ONLY GENERAL MUHAMMED, GENERAL OBASANJO, GENERAL DANJUMA BUT ALSO LT.-COL. (NOW BRIGADIER) SHEHU YAR'ADUA, COL. JOE GARBA, COL. OLU BAJOWA, COL. I. BABANGIDA AND COL. I. TAIWO AMONG OTHERS.

IN FACT, IT WAS THE MEN ENGAGED IN THE AMBUSH LAID NEAR FALOMO FOR THE MURDER OF GENRAL OBASANJO THAT MISTAKENLY POUNCED ON COL. DUMUJE AND SHOT AND WONDED HIM.

THE DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION SO FAR COLLECTED SPECIFY THE FOLLOWING AS THE REASONS FOR THE COUP ATTEMPT:

1. IT WAS ALLEGED THAT THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT WAS GOING "COMMUNIST" AND THE COUP WAS INTENDED TO RE-ESTABLISH THE POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT.

(II) THAT THE ABORTIVE COUP MAKERS WERE OPPOSED TO THE RECENT PROMOTION OF BRIGADIERS TO GENERALS. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL THEOPHILUS DANJUMA AS LT.-GENERAL AND CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF.

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(III) TO RESTORE GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COUNTRY. THEY ARGUED THAT HE WAS NOT GIVEN A CHANCE TO CHANGE THE STYLE OF HIS LEADERSHIP WHICH THEY ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE PURPOSELESS AND CORRUPT.

(IV) IT WAS INTENDED TO RESTORE TO OFFICE ALL THE FORMER MILITARY GOVERNORS. ALL OFFICIALS RETIRED FOR WHATEVER REASONS TO BE RE-INSTATED AND "DEALT WITH BY LEGAL MEANS."

THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT WISHES TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THE ABORTIVE COUP WAS REACTIONARY IN CONCEPTION AND BLOODY BY DESIGN. IT HAD NEITHER RELIGIOUS NOR ETHNIC MOTIVATION.

LT.-COL. DIMKA IS A RELATION OF MR. S.K. DIMKA, THE KWARA STATE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE WHO IS MARRIED TO GENERAL GOWON'S ELDER SISTER. DIMKA IS CURRENTLY UNDER INTERROGATION ALONG WITH OTHER ACCOMPLICES OF LT.-COL. DIMKA.

FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THE INTENTION OF LT.-COL. DIMKA WAS TO RESTORE GENERAL GOWON AND HIS ASSOCIATES TO POWER. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAS AMPLE EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON KNEW AND BY IMPLICATION APPROVED THE COUP PLOT.

IT IS KNOWN THAT LT.-COL. DIMKA HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH GENERAL GOWON BOTH DIRECTLY AND THROUGH SOME OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE ABORTIVE COUP PLOT. ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAD CONFESSED UNDER INTERROGATION THAT HE PERSONALLY WENT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM SEVERAL TIMES TO BRIEF GENERAL GOWON ABOUT THE PLAN. HE WENT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM ON THE PRETEXT THAT HE WAS GOING ON PRIVATE MEDICAL TREATMENT AND THE ARMY RECORDS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT HE WAS PERMITTED TO VISIT THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT ON THOSE VERY OCCASSIONS CONFESSED BY THIS PARTICULAR OFFICER. THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT WISHES TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RE-ASSURE THE NATION THAT EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL. THE OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE COUP ARE BEING ROUNDED UP AND THE DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN EACH CASE IS BEING DELINEATED AND ASSESSED.

THE FOREIGN BACKING AND INVOLVEMENT WHICH THE ABORTIVE PLOTTERS HAVE ENJOYED ARE EQUALLY BEING TRACED AND ASSESSED.

AS SOON AS INVESTIGATIONS ARE COMPLETED, THE FEDERAL MILITARY
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GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE PROMPT ACTION TO DEAL WITH ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE PLOT. UNQUOTE.
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